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## **Editorial: Beware the 'pinkwashing'**

Before the Indianapolis Colts take to Heinz Field to square off against the Pittsburgh Steelers Oct. 26, a clash far more controversial than anything during the game is scheduled to take place.

Nancy Brinker, Susan G. Komen Foundation founder, is set to accept a \$100,000 check from Martin Craighead, chairman of oil and fracking company Baker Hughes Inc. Both entities have faced sharp criticism this month after the partnership — now in its second year — was announced; and rightly so. The irony of Baker Hughes producing 1,000 pink fracking drill bits in celebration was nearly too outrageous to believe.

“Some advocates are furious because some scientists have linked chemicals used in fracking to cancer, though there are disputes about fracking’s health impact,” reported Bill Briggs of NBC News Saturday.

Nonprofit group Breast Cancer Action has coined a term for such situations: “pinkwashing.”

“Alhambra Water, for example, is ‘pinkwashing’ by selling plastic polycarbonate water bottles which contain BPA, a hormone-disrupting chemical linked to breast cancer — while claiming to care about (and

profiting from) breast cancer,” wrote Karuna Jaggar, BCA executive director, in a Sept. 30 press release.

Corporate altruism shouldn’t be dismissed out of hand, but when the products contain or produce known cancer-causing agents, they deserve a second look. Couldn’t the manufacturers of such products just simply make something less dangerous instead? This debacle is a good reminder not everything slathered in pink this National Breast Cancer Awareness Month is worth supporting.

Fortunately, BAC’s yearly campaign, Think Before You Pink, has produced this list of questions to ask yourself before blindly throwing money down on just any pink products you might come across:

1. Does any money from this purchase go to support breast cancer programs? How much?
2. What organization will get the money? What will they do with the funds, and how do these programs turn the tide of the breast cancer epidemic?
3. Is there a “cap” on the amount the company will donate? Has this maximum donation already been met? Can you tell?
4. Does this purchase put you or someone you love at risk for exposure to toxins linked to breast cancer? What is the company doing to ensure its products are not contributing to the breast cancer epidemic?

If these queries can't be answered to your satisfaction, here's something to consider: Instead of routing your donation through a company, cut out the middleman and simply write a check to your favorite charity directly.